



MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD MEETING OF APRIL 5, 2022

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MADERA CEMETERY DISTRICT, HELD TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2022 AT 9:00 A.M. AT THE ARBOR VITAE CEMETERY LOCATED AT 1301 ROBERTS AVE., MADERA, CA 93637

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

DAVID NEMETH
JIM HARPER
LOIS BETTY
CANDY TALLEY
MAURICE CAPPELLUTI

PUBLIC/EMPLOYEES PRESENT:

BELVA BARE -DISTRICT MANAGER
ARTHUR GARDNER – ASST. MANAGER
TRACY ISAAK – OFFICE TECHNICIAN
RONNIE RAMIREZ – OPERATIONS MANAGER
STEPHEN CLOETERS – H.R. GENERALIST
OMAR VERDUGO – GROUNDSMAN I

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairperson David Nemeth called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL OF BOARD:

Chairperson David Nemeth took roll of the Board. David Nemeth, Jim Harper, Lois Betty, Maurice Cappelluti, and Candy Talley were present.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:

Trustee Lois Betty presented the flag.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY AGENDA ITEM:

None

RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION:

Chairperson David Nemeth asked for a closed session.

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION - REPORT OF ANY ACTION TAKEN DURING

No action taken

DISCUSSION ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022:

District Manager Belva Bare went over list of accomplishments.

- Hiring and training of new district manager- going well.
- Created new Human Resources Generalist position – going well
- LAFCO study for absorbing Country Club area into MCD's sphere of influence (the Board would like to make a field trip to Chowchilla Cemetery)
- Petitioning Madera County for COVID relief funds – Arthur is working on this, but we've heard nothing yet. Jim Harper suggested funds could be used to upgrade our water system with the drought going on. Belva said that Carol from CAPC applied and was denied but got help from her state senator and is reapplying. Loise Betty said she would call Tom Wheeler that night.
- Update employee handbook – this is something still in process. Arthur and Stephen are working on it.
- Compiling financial information from County reports – many hours spent on this project
- Security cameras at Oakhill Cemetery
- Repaired downed fence at Oakhill – insurance paid for it
- Investigated selling Westlake Property – had appraisal done
- Niche wall and beautification at Oakhill
- Completed glass wall and lighting at Calvary
- Installed two new niche banks at Calvary
- Completed well at Calvary
- Purchased two John Deer Gators
- Purchased Smithco Sweeper
- Replaced large well pump at Arbor Vitae
- Investigated solar for the cemeteries – looked at purchasing and leasing programs
- Purchased various pieces of small equipment
- Tree trimming will be completed by end of fiscal year
- Need to complete cleanups at Oakhill and Northfork
- Reviewed activities that helped promote the District
 - Belva Bare as past and present member of CAPC Board, Madera Chamber of Commerce, patient advocate at Madera Community Hospital, Mid-State CSDA committee member
 - Little Church involvement
 - Kept public aware of COVID policies
 - Jim Harper received the Wayne Byington/Ruben Siemens Award
 - Belva Bare received CAPC's President's Award
- 3.5% pay increase for District employees
- Successfully handled large influx of burials

REVIEW OF DISTRICT FINANCES:

Assistant Manager Arthur Gardner led a review and discussion of graphs illustrating District finances since 2013. There was a discussion on projected revenue and expenses. Belva mentioned there is planned construction of 4,000 new houses in Madera. David Nemeth would like to see PERS costs for retirement and medical on the reports.

PLOT AVAILABILITY AT ALL CEMETERIES:

Stephen Cloeters presented charts showing the breakdown of burials by type at all cemeteries. Arbor Vitae has 998 plots available but only eight sites allow upright headstones in the new blocks. Arthur Gardner asked whether we should open up more areas for upright stones. Candy Talley asked whether we charge more for upright headstones (no). Belva said we need a beautification project for niche area. Arthur suggested we convert some single niches to doubles to meet demand for doubles. There are 58 crypts available in AV's mausoleums.

Calvary has 1095 plots available, 334 niches, and 157 mausoleum crypts.

Oakhill: 549 plots, 105 niches

North Fork: 410 plots available

Stephen reviewed MCD pricing in comparison to other districts. MCD has the second-lowest sales & service charges. Candy Talley said she felt good about MCD's pricing compared to others'. Stephen pointed out that some districts charge more for upright rows and for 'premium' plots. David said it's good that we increase prices to compensate for inflation, but our prices are good for now.

REVIEW OF DISTRICT EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES:

Operations Manager Ronnie Ramirez reviewed the current inventory and condition of MCD's vehicles and equipment. Everything is in fair to excellent condition. There has been no surplus sale for a while because of COVID, but we will be selling soon after the budget has been completed, probably in July. Candy Talley asked why we are selling the Smithco Sweeper, to which Ronnie replied that he hates to sell it, but it's worn and needs replacing. New versions are not as effective. Ronnie said a few mowers need to be replaced, possibly with electric mowers. He will see if he can trade in old mowers to help lower the price of new ones.

REVIEW OF ROAD SEALING:

Arthur reviewed the road sealing schedule. North Fork is scheduled to be done in 2022.

REVIEW OF IMMEDIATE, 2-YEAR & 5-YEAR GOALS:

Arthur Gardner reviewed the goals:

- YEAR 1 –
 - New District office
 - Office furniture
 - Finalize, print and distribute Employee Handbook
 - Update Policies and Procedures Manual
 - Review, evaluate, choose & implement mapping software
 - Install fencing at Oakhill
 - Replace the roof at North Fork
 - Purchase mower for Arbor Vitae
 - New tent for Calvary
 - Service tractor at North Fork
 - Purchase grave boards for Oakhill
 - New sprinklers for AV
 - Explore Oakhill expansion, low moisture landscaping, niches in rocks
 - Jim said to add cleanup of Westlake property
- YEAR 2 -
 - Plan and build AV mausoleum
 - Niche development where needed
 - Lay out additional blocks at AV as needed

Continue Oakhill fencing project in phases
North Fork remodel/expansion
Continue planning of Oakhill expansion area
YEAR 5 - Purchase Ranchos property for future development
Sell or trade Westlake property
Develop Oakhill expansion area
Develop additional blocks for burial at Calvary and AV

REVIEW OF FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET:

An additional bit of information was added to this form to show the percentage of the budget that each line item consumes. 80% us spent on personnel, and 43% is spent on salary alone. The utilities and refund budgets are higher than in 2021. We are waiting for a quote from GSRMA for our insurance quote.

REVIEW/APPROVAL OF CALPERS PRE-PAYMENT

Chairman David Nemeth said this is the payment we do each year.

REVIEW/DISCUSSION OF HEALTH, DENTAL, VISION INSURANCE:

Stephen Cloeters said there are no changes in pricing for 2023. He explained that he factored in an 8% increase in the budget for health insurance. He reviewed charts comparing prices and costs of the various plans.

EMPLOYEE SALARY PRESENTATION:

Stephen Cloeters, with Omar Verdugo observing, handed out printouts to the Board. The employees asked for a 6% pay raise. Some guys thought they shouldn't have to ask for a raise and others thought they should ask for a raise according to the current index. Stephen said there was a heated debate and that the majority ruled. Stephen reviewed the inflation rate and trends in COLAs. He said it is hard to attract people to work at the cemetery and discussed what some employers are doing to help keep employees. David Nemeth thanked Stephen for his presentation and said he hoped that Omar would be able to take over duties the next yar.

DISCUSSION/REPORT/APPROVAL OF SALARY SCHEDULE CHANGES:

A discussion was had on several salary-change options, using handouts that illustrated the effect of different percentages and pay-raise schedules as a reference. The Board had previously discussed changing the service anniversaries on which raises would be given. The schedule for pay raises had been at 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, 3 years, 10 years, and every five years after that. Stephen Cloeters opined that we need to keep carrots in place to attract and keep new employees. Lois Betty motioned to change the steps to 6 months, 1 year, 3 years, 5 years and every five years after that, all at 2.5% increases. Jim Harper seconded. Chair David Nemeth polled the Board and all were in favor: David Nemeth, aye; Jim Harper, aye; Lois Betty, aye; Maurice Cappelluti, aye, Candy Talley, aye.

Lois Betty motioned to approve the CALPERS pre-ay, Maurice Cappelluti seconded. Chair David Nemeth polled the Board and all were in favor: David Nemeth, aye; Jim Harper, aye; Lois Betty, aye; Maurice Cappelluti, aye, Candy Talley, aye.

ADJOURNMENT: 12:50 p.m.

